Registration and other Departments. Members of the community who had acquired proficiency in the Ayurvedic system of treatment should be exempted from passing the Ayurveda examination and should be awarded grants-in-aid.

Members of the community who were employed as teachers in grant-in-aid schools should be recruited as teachers in departmental schools, their service in the grant-in-aid schools being also counted for pension.

Puduval lands should be assigned to the members of the community on concessional terms. Sanction should also be accorded for the grant of some land for the establishment of a poor-house for the benefit of the community.

Lastly, the member requested that a member should be nominated every year to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly to represent his community. A member from the community should also be nominated to the Legislative Council.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Shadananan Nayar, as I have said more than once, the extension of fee concessions and the grant of scholarships can be considered only when our financial condition improves.

Applications from members of your community are given special consideration, when classes for compounders, nurses and midwives are opened.

Qualified members of your community, as well as of others, are entertained in all departments of Government services when there are vacancies. There is no justification whatever for granting any concession in the way of confirmation or increase of pay when once they have entered service. It does not help them at all by your mentioning their names.

The Departments of Land Revenue, Excise, Forest, and others are all open to members of your community. There is no reason to exempt them, however, from the examinations laid down by the Ayurveda Department.

Government have accepted the principle of recruiting a certain number of teachers in departmental schools from among the aided school teachers.

Your community can put in applications for lands which are available for assignment.

The question of representation in the Assembly and in the Legislative Council will be considered with the reform of the one and the revision of the rules of the other.

147. The disabilities and grievances of the fishing community of Travancore.

MR. L. A. NETTO (*Nominated*) said that the subject he wanted to speak about was the same as the one he represented at the previous

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session of the Assembly, *viz.* the needs of the fisher-folk. The *Statement of Action* taken on the representations made in the previous year showed that no action was taken on three of the items urged; two items were recorded and ten items were only under consideration.

The fishing industry was capable of enormous expansion. The fisher-folk, who numbered over two hundred thousand, were responsible for the production of food for the consumption of about 95 per cent. of the population of the State. The decline in the fishing industry and fish trade was mainly due to the depressed condition of the fishing people. The geographical and social isolation of the fisher-folk made them scarcely known to outsiders. As there was a general ignorance concerning the real condition of the fisher-folk, the first step towards bettering their condition should be to study their conditions. A committee should therefore be appointed to study the causes of their gradual deterioration, their poor economic position and other evils and to suggest proper remedies therefor. The economic survey of the State conducted by the Census Commissioner covered only the economic condition of the fisher-folk and nothing else.

The fishing community should be given adequate representation in the popular institutions of the State. Apart from their numerical strength, they represented a distinct and exclusive industry with interests and needs different from those of other communities. The backwardness of the community was another strong reason to induce the Government to afford them an opportunity to explain their special disabilities before constituted popular bodies. The Government should make it a rule in future to nominate at least one member of the community to the Legislative Council, two members to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and one member to the Development Board.

Another pressing need of the fisher-folk was the proper sanitation of their villages and free medical aid. The more serious epidemics which recently proved a menace to the State had their origin among the coast people. They visited them first and left them last. The question of adequate sanitation of the populated coastal villages embraced the whole State. In this connection, the member wanted to urge on the attention of the Government a matter affecting the health of the whole town of Trivandrum, *viz.*, the urgent necessity for the removal of the nightsoil depot from Valiatura. Formerly, the nightsoil collected every day from the town was trenched at three places *viz.* Poojapura, the Karamanai Agricultural Farm and Valiatura. But the former two nightsoil depots had since been closed and the whole quantity of nightsoil was trenched at Valiatura in the sandy bed bordering the public road leading from Vallakadavu to Valiatura pier and the canal running to Tiruvallam causing unbearable annoyance and hardship to the people of the locality. It had become a source of great danger to the health of the public of the town. The Municipal authorities should be directed to select a suitable site outside the town to locate the nightsoil depot.

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Most of the coastal villages were without even private medical practitioners. The Government should therefore establish free dispensaries within reasonable distances along the coast. The rule that the people should provide a building of approved plan suitably furnished and equipped for housing a dispensary, as a preliminary condition to the sanctioning of dispensaries in rural areas, should be waived in the case of the fisher-folk, who were very poor. A dispensary was opened at Valiatura five years back. It was affording medical relief to over sixteen thousand people every year. It was housed in a rented building, the people of the locality paying the rent. The Government was insisting on the people providing a building to house the dispensary and a site had also been granted for the purpose. But a building of the approved plan would cost the people not less than Rs. 6,000 and a sum of Rs. 4,000 would be required for levelling the site. The people of the locality were too poor to raise this amount. Valiatura was as important a place as any other part of the town, for which the Government had provided hospitals at their own cost. The Government should, therefore, construct a building to house the hospital at Valiatura also.

The Vadi St. Antony's Co-operative Society at Quilon had started a co-operative housing scheme, for the benefit of the fisher-folk inhabiting the Vadi beach. The society had applied for a building grant of Rs. 6,000 as well as for a long term loan of Rs. 14,000 at 4 per cent. interest for putting up houses for the fisher-folk at the site acquired for the purpose by the society. The grant and loan should be sanctioned at an early date.

Lastly, the member represented about the necessity for giving adequate representation to the educated members of the community in public service and for preferring them for appointment in the Fisheries and Co-operative Departments.

DEWAN'S REPLY: We have been told so often, Mr. Netto, that the people are sick of committees. So, another committee should not be appointed for that reason. You want a committee to enquire into the state of fishermen. But, you yourself have been telling use a great deal about them; and we will attend to their needs as far as possible and deal with their grievances.

In regard to public health, the provision of a dispensary is most important. The provision of sanitary and medical aid is being held up, at the moment, of course, on account of financial considerations. But the subject cannot be kept back; and the fishermen will benefit with others when we are able to extend it.

The question of changing the site of the Trivandrum nightsoil depot will be settled soon.

The case of the site of the dispensary at Valiatura will be considered.

The question of giving a loan to the co-operative society at Vadi is receiving attention.

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The question of making appointments in the Fisheries and Co-operative Departments from among educated fisher-folk will be considered.

The representation of members of your community in the Council and in the Assembly must await the new Rules and the new constitution.

148. Disabilities of Ezhavas.

MR. M. S. ANIRUDHAN (*Municipal Council, Alleppey*) said that the Ezhava community in the State formed nearly one fifth of her population and that their standard of education and culture equalled that of any other community in the State. They contributed the biggest share to the State exchequer and national wealth. In the commercial and industrial development of the State, they played no insignificant part. The community was solely responsible for the promotion of the *coir* industry of the State, the annual export value derived from which amounted to over two crores of rupees. Nearly three crores of rupees worth of paddy and rice were imported every year for consumption in the State. The community could therefore claim that they provided the means for nearly two-thirds of the staple food imported for the people of Travancore. In the words of the late Deawn Mr. M. E. Watts, "the Ezhavas were entitled to special consideration and gratitude of all Travancore" on this account. But it was regrettable that such an important community was subjected to certain civic disabilities. The chief among them was the restriction placed on them in regard to the use of the public roads. The circumstances under which the Vaikam *satyagraha* was started were fresh in the memory of all. Even the judiciary was unsympathetic towards the community as would be seen from 5 T. L. R., page 93, where an invidious distinction was made between King's highways and *gramaveethies*. It was high time that this ruling was set aside by legislation. Ever since the inauguration of the Assembly the representatives of the community had been clamouring for throwing open all the public roads in the State to all the communities. But the Government contented by saying that there were only a few miles of such roads. The real question for decision was not about the length of such roads, but whether there was an interference with the enjoyment of civic rights and privileges by all communities.

In the case of schools also the members of the community were subject to the same disability. It was highly regrettable to find that as many as twelve Government educational institutions were not thrown open to all classes of people. Two of these institutions were in the capital itself. Similarly, there were many public tanks, wells and *satrams*, not open to the depressed classes. A resolution had been passed two years back by the Legislative Council urging on the Government the need for throwing open all public tanks, wells, *satrams* and roads for the use of all sections of the people. But the Government did not take any steps to give effect to this resolution.

Another disability which the members of the community were subjected to was the inadequate representation of the community in

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